Sponsored Scheme namely, Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). The States are empowered to plan, sanction, implement and execute individual rural water supply projects and no specific cost norms have been laid for this.

In 2003-04, Government initiated three schemes for installation of one lakh hand pumps, revival of one lakh traditional sources and provision of drinking water facilities to one lakh rural primary schools in two years (2003-04 & 2004-05) as announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on Independence Day, 2002. The cost norms for these were fixed on all India average basis and these were Rs. 34,750/- per hand pump, Rs.15,250/- per traditional source and Rs.30,000/- per school. The amount was released to the States as per these norms. The States were also authorized to dovetail funds from ARWSP (normal) and State resources in case the actual expenditure comes to be more than the cost norms. These schemes were only upto 31.03.2005.

Rapid Irrigation Benefit Programme

†3538. SHRI LAXMINARAYAN SHARMA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for providing Government assistance to the backward States under the Rapid Irrigation Benefit Programme;

(b) whether these criteria are different from that fixed for the hilly States, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government would ensure that Madhya Pradesh will not be discriminated against in comparison to the hilly States in the matter of providing assistance to the backward States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) was launched in 1996-97 by Government of India to provide Central Loan Assistance (CLA) to approved major/medium irrigation projects in the country, with the objective to accelerate the implementation of those projects which are beyond resources capability and the states and are in an advanced stage of completion.

There is no classification of States as backward States for providing CLA under AIBP. However, hilly States of Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Jammu

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

& Kashmir, Uttaranchal in additin to North Eastern States & projects benefiting Kalahandi, Bolangir and Korapur districts of Orissa are categorized as Special Category States/region for providing CLA under, AIBP. The CLA to special category States/region is provided in the ratio of 3:1 (Center: State) as against 2:1 (Centre: State) for non-special category States like Madhya Pradesh.

In addition, the States which are willing to rationalise the water rates equal to the Operation and Maintenance costs of the projects within a period of five years are declared as Reforming States to facilitate more favourable ratio for Central Assistance for projects under Normal Programme. For reforming states of non-special Category, the Centre-State ratio is 4:1 and that for Special Category States, the centre's share is 100 per cent and the State's share is nil. The State of Madhya Pradesh has been declared as a reforming State.

Effect of Rivers Interlinking Project on Coastal Water and Marine Resources

†3539. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any study with regard to impact of immersion of river on the coastal water and fisheries resources in view of the question raised about the viability of river linking project;

(b) whether it is a fact that water borne diseases and health related problems will develop as a result of linking of rivers;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of the steps Government have taken to address those problems?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) National Water Development Agency (NWDA) while preparing the feasibility reports of river link proposals carries out preliminary studies with regard to environmental ecological and socio-economic aspects. However specific studies for impact of immersion of river on the coastal water and fisheries resources have not been done. The Detailed Project Reports (DPR) of the link proposals provide for a chapter on "Environmental Impact Assessment" studies to cover all the relevant environmental issues that have impact due

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.